

Sunday August 15, 2021

US v. Mehanna (No. 09-10017-GAO)

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To: U.S.D.J. George A. O'Toole, Jr. From: Tarek Mehanna

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASS.

Dear Judge O'Toole,

As my sentencing judge, I'm writing to you in accordance with the Federal Bureau of Prisons program statement dealing with inmate hunger strikes (p. 7), which specifies that an inmate's sentencing judge must be notified whenever an inmate undertaking a hunger strike is subject to involuntary procedures of any kind. I am now such an inmate.

I have been imprisoned at USP Marion, in Illinois, since February of 2014, in the infamous Communication Management Unit ("CMU"). This unit has also been referred to as "Gitmo North" because it's historically confined a disproportionate number of Muslim prisoners. Here, we're severely limited in our communication with the outside world on many levels, details which are irrelevant for purposes of this letter.

What is relevant is that the administrators of the Marion CMU, in particular "Intelligence Research Specialist" Kathy Hill, under the auspices of Warden Daniel Sproul, have facilitated an environment at the Marion CMU in which Muslim inmates are treated with blatant discrimination and hostility. As one correctional officer put it in regards to Muslims at the CMU, "double standards are a way of life." At various points in recent years, this has manifested itself in a number of ways, including (but not limited to):

- verbal insulting of the religion of Islam by Hill & others
- withholding mail of Muslim inmates
- prohibiting the teaching / learning of Islam / Arabic
- prohibiting Muslim inmates from congregational prayer
- subjecting Muslim inmates to far greater use of solitary conf.

(cont.)

Regarding all of these points, I've repeatedly written to government agencies, including the BOP Office of Internal Affairs and the DoJ Office of the Inspector General.

I'm directly affected by these discriminatory policies as I write this. I'm currently in my eighth month in the Cmu's isolation wing (the "SHU"), having been placed here with no accusation of having violated any BOP policy, but rather due to a vindictive warden and I.R.S. acting within the parameters of the Islamophobic climate they've cultivated in this unit. After months of waiting in silence for something to change, with no clear explanation of what I did to merit placement in solitary confinement since January 28th, 2021, and no indication that I'll be let out or transferred to another institution, I felt that I had no choice but to stop eating in protest of the unfair treatment to which I'm being subjected. Since Tuesday July 6th, I haven't eaten any food. My hunger strike continues to this day, as the administration of USP Marion has made absolutely no effort to resolve the situation, and instead seems content to leave me in isolation in my current state. Each morning, I'm forced to undergo multiple medical tests under threat of use of force upon refusal, and once my vital signs reach a threshold of deterioration, I will be forcibly strapped to a chair, have a feeding tube rammed up my nose, and be subject to force feeding in which two bottles of Ensure, daily, are pumped directly into my stomach. As of this writing, I haven't eaten for forty one days, having missed 123 meals, with no end in sight.

Again, I'm writing you this brief letter due to your position as my sentencing judge, with the Bureau of Prisons program statement clarifying that you are to be informed of such circumstances.

Take care, and thanks for your attention to this matter.

Tarek Mehanna (no. 05315-748)

United States Penitentiary

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